

WRESTLING FORUM

FEBRUARY 27, 1988

VOLUME III

ISSUE 4

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Wrestling Forum is published the 15th and 30th of each month and mailed first class the following day. Single copy price is \$1.25. Copyright (c) Jon gallagher 1988. Shame on you if you photocopy this bulletin; it's not nice.

FIFTY DOWN,??? TO GO

Welcome to the 50th edition of Wrestling Forum. I realize that Dave Meltzer put out more than that just last year, but still, I think 50 is pretty impressive. I just hope that we can do at least 50 more.

Before getting into the news and other info, let's get our subscription information out of the way first. We publish on the 15th and 30th of each month and mail the bulletins on the next day. Cost is \$1.25 per issue and you can subscribe in any amount up to six months' worth. Foreign subscriptions (overseas) are \$2.50 per issue with the same maximum length.

Speaking of foreign subscriptions, we'd been in business for two years as of last issue without a single overseas subscriber! During the past two weeks we've received subscriptions from Switzerland, Australia, and Japan. Welcome to you, and to all our new readers.

The yearbook ran into a monumental problem this week...I went in to pick it up from the place that we had do the binding and found that the ENTIRE thing had been bound BACKWARDS. In other words it started with page one hundred and something and ended with page one. The problem is that the holes they punched in the margin were punched in the wrong side. Anyway, they agreed to redo the whole thing (it had to be completely reprinted) and I'm supposed to pick it up on Thurs. March 3. I'll have it in the mail to you by the week-end.

For those of you who haven't ordered yet but want to, you'd better hurry. We had a limited number of extra copies printed (20 of them) and we won't be doing any more copies of it. Cost is \$10.00 each and if you want it sent 1st class, add \$1.00 extra. Foreign, add \$5.00. The finished product has the complete results of our year end balloting, a month by month recap of the major promotions, title histories for 1987, a special edition of Jeopardy! as a quiz feature, our best 3rd fall from 1987, Plus a feature article called "Competing with the rest." It runs around 100 pages (depending how you count.)

The March 30th issue of Wrestling Forum is already full and we haven't even started it yet! Not only will we be covering Wrestlemania IV, but also Crockett's show on the same day. I'll have two live reports to do as the NWA will be in Peoria on the afternoon of the 20th and the WWF will tape a Wrestling Challenge from Springfield, IL that evening. I'll be at both shows and providing I don't run into Mr. Runnells, I'll have the reports. My apologies to those of you who got last issue a day late. My parents have both been in the hospital for the past three weeks in and out of intensive and coronary care and we just ran out of time to do the bulletin. About half of the bulletins made it to the post office on the 16th; the rest were mailed on the 17th. Sorry again. Technically, that means we've been late $1\frac{1}{2}$ times out of 50.

So much for the soap opera. Time to get on to the news. A reminder once again...I work from 3pm-11pm my time at my regular job. Best time to get a hold of me by phone is after 11:30 my time and I'm usually up until 1 am. And now for something completely different, here's Jeff Siegel and the Wrestling Barometer.

THE WRESTLING BAROMETER

FEBRUARY 1988

BY JEFF SIEGEL

Welcome to the February edition of "The Wrestling Barometer", Wrestling Forum's exclusive census of what's hot and what's not in the wacky world of professional wrestling!

Another solid month's worth of "Barometer" entries, leading me to believe that the concept has really caught on. Now, Jon and I would like to see it get even bigger. In fact, we'd also like to see some of you folks from inside the business casting your votes as well--it'll add yet another perspective to the "Barometer's". As usual, all entries and comments will be kept completely confidential at the writer's request.

Also as usual, we begin with a quick review of the procedure that's used for tallying "Barometer" entries: 5 points is awarded for a first place vote, 3 points is awarded for a second place vote, 1 point is awarded for a third place vote, and $\frac{1}{2}$ point is awarded for every item that is included on a voter's list from fourth place on. Then, a minimum point total is arbitrarily decided upon for inclusion in this column. The minimum point total allows us to focus on the month's major trends.

Now, on to the February results:

What's Hot

(Needed to qualify: 20 points)

1. 2/5 Hebner "Double Ref" angle (63 $\frac{1}{2}$ points)
2. WM4 speculation (47 points)
3. The Varsity Club (22 points)
4. The resurgence of World Class (21 $\frac{1}{2}$ points)
5. Paul Dangerously's "I Hate The AWA" Danger Zones (20 points)

What's Not

(Needed to qualify: 20 points)

1. Andre's 2/5 performance/side suplex (41 $\frac{1}{2}$ points)
2. Dusty Rhodes' ego/booking/"blackmail" angle (37 $\frac{1}{2}$ points)
3. The NWA (29 points)
4. Bench press contests (20 $\frac{1}{2}$ points)

Notes: WOW!!! That's about all you can see regarding the "Double Ref" angle on the 2/5 "Main Event" show. A simply stunning example of creative booking, it deservedly garnered the highest point total in the "Barometer's" history. Other adjectives used to describe this work of genius on the ballots? Try "the greatest", "incredible", and "something Vince couldn't come up with!" Congrats, Junior--this time you really deserve it....However, you can't have everything. At the same time that the "Double Ref" angle was running away with the "What's Hot" victory, Andre's pitiful performance in the same match managed to capture the "What's Not" top spot. Some readers even saw fit to award their number one pick to, more specifically, the dreaded side suplex that the decrepid old giant tried to execute....For the second month in a row, Wrestlemania IV speculation finished in the "Hot" side's second slot (last month it lost out to the Hogan/Andre/DiBiase angle as well). I suspect we'll be seeing WM IV --in one way or another--on this list for several months to come....Congrats are also in order for World Class (gee, I knew that someday I'd be able to say something nice about them!) Ken Mantell's own brand of creative booking vaulted them onto the plus side of the "Barometer" in their first

appearance ever on the "Hot" list. Here's hoping they're able to sustain this momentum...And finally, "Alas poor Virgil I knew him well." As a personal favor to big Dust I grouped together all of the related "Barometer" qualifiers that involved him. Otherwise, he probably could have claimed another three or four spots on the dark side. And if that's not enough, the NWA as an entity grabbed third place, while their questionable bench press contests followed immediately after. Quite a nightmare for "The Dream", I'm afraid.

The deadline for February "Barometer" ballots is March 22. Entries should be sent to:

Jeff Siegel
P.O. Box 5461
Evanston, IL 60204

XX
AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

What do you do when you've got only one show booked over the period of a month or so, you've got very little talent, and you don't know what your next step is going to be? You start tap dancing like hell, throw out some twist to championship title holders that confuse even the stout hearted and you go with some cock and bull story about reorganizing the promotion. Yes, fans, it's fairy tale time from the Twin Cities starring uncle Verne (Greggie could play one of the seven dwarfs)!

Depending on where you live, the AWA heavyweight title is held up. It also depends on where you live as to who it's being held up between. Here in the midwest (basically Minneapolis, Green Bay and the Dakotas) the belt is held up between Curt and Greg. This is a result of the 2/4 match in the farewell card in Minneapolis. There is some argument going on between Verne and Stanly Blackburn about whether or not the match was for the title or not. The referee in that match was former football star Leo Nominelli and he hit Curt with a couple of football tackles before Greg pinned him. Verne says it was a title match, Blackburn says it wasn't, but at least it takes the fans minds off the fact that there aren't any cards scheduled in the near future. Out in the Pacific Northwest, the title is held up between Curt and the Grappler. In Memphis, it's the tag belts that's been held up between the Rockers and the R&R Express. If you want to sort this mess out, go ahead. I've got more important things to think about like calculus theories...you know, things not so complicated.

Meanwhile, Tom Zenk has told Verne to take this job and shove it... seems that during this "re-organizational" period, Verne laid everyone off that wasn't on guarantee. Those wrestlers on guarantee consisted of just Curt, Greg and his allowance, and possibly Kevin Kelly. The ones who weren't on guarantee, of course, got no pay and were not eligible for unemployment benefits because they are considered independent contractors. Zenk was upset, not only about being laid off, but also because of that fiasco where he had to go to a draw with a retired wrestler on the last Minneapolis card.

However, somebody has taken notice. Ricky Rice, who worked with us in Chicago and has one of the top three dropkicks in the game, is now due in and reportedly will get a good push (gee, right after he did jobs for everyone in Minot, ND). He'll be a good one for someone to steal soon and could be a leading contender for 1988 rookie of the year.

Finally, ESPN broadcasts the AWA show every day at 4pm eastern. It's mostly reruns but occasionally they do show the most current show. Not that it's worth watching, but I thought you might like to know.

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WRESTLERS ARE PEOPLE TOO
BY TRENT WALTERS

Editor's note: How about this for a first... someone willing to let us use their name. Trent is our source for 90% of what we use in our Calgary report. Here are his views on the Calgary Wrestlers:

ROSS HART

Very nice to me and quite open. Teaches school during the week. Very good memory. His first match ever was in Hungary in front of 15,000 people. A credit to the sport.

STEVE DISALVO

In a single word "misunderstood". I think he knows I am smart. Great sense of humor. Appears to be moody, as some say he has an attitude problem, others say he's a nice guy.

BAD NEWS ALLEN

I never met him. He gets a bit crazy sometimes. Reminds me of Dave Schultz because he gets out of control sometimes. For example a few years ago in a match with Bret, Bret hit him in the head with a cane instead of chest. Allen then legit choked Bret for 10 seconds and then left the ring.

OWEN HART

Never met him but, from what I understand very nice although always wants a push (who can blame him he's the best in the world) sometimes he tells his opponent one finishing move, Bruce (the booker) says another and they end up "shooting" the finish.

KEITH HART

Won the 100 a while back...nice guy, doesn't wrestle much anymore...fireman now.

BRUCE HART

Extremely smart and very personable.

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

I'll say this for Jim Crockett and Dusty Rhodes...they've got guts. Not a whole lot of brains, mind you, but guts galore.

According to Broadcast magazine, Crockett has big plans made for a live arena show to be broadcast on WTBS on March 27, at 4pm EST. In case that date and time doesn't ring a bell, that's the same day and time that Vince McMahon is having a little get together out in Atlantic City.

If this sounds familiar, it should. We suggested right here in the Forum in our December 15th issue that Crockett should have put Starcade on WTBS for free to destroy the Survivor Series on Pay Per View. Crocketts' people made all sorts of noise as to why that idea wouldn't work. Meanwhile, Titan used the same idea on January 24th to wipe out Crockett's Bunkhouse Stampede PPV event.

When I suggested the free-TV idea, the free show wouldn't have been going up against anything major like Wrestlemania and Hogan's quest to regain his title. Titan's free show was a success for 4 main reasons. 1) Bunkhouse Stampedes aren't over nationwide 2) The USA show was available in a bunch more homes. 3) They had NO undercard. 4) Most fans figured Dusty would win anyway and they just didn't care. Well, even if the WTBS show on 3-27 takes away a million bucks from Titan's gross, Wrestlemania is still destined to be the most successful ever. Oh well, by putting on a free show, it gives Dusty a chance to say, "See! them damn kay fabe sheets don't know nothin! Free TV didn't work!"

Otherwise, how are things here? Well, the syndicated show has improved to the point that I'm impressed. Gone are the days of going off the air while the main event is still in progress. Instead, the show usually opens with the main event. We still have to see the match interrupted half a dozen times while they try to sell us Lee Press On Nails, but I hear that's changing too.

Let's talk about good old fashioned guts and dedication for a second. Road Warrior Animal had sustained a serious eye injury on Jan. 29, the night before they shot the angle where Barbarian and Warlord destroyed the Warriors. From what I can gather, Animal took a kick to the face, and part of the bone around the eye was broken. The force of the kick dislodged his eye from the socket. He has been in the hospital legit, and hospital personnel were worried about him losing the sight in that eye. Animal deserves our praise and prayers for consenting to shoot the angle despite the agony he must have been in.

They've found a hot angle with Flair and Sting and it looks like they're going to run with it. Sting's been having his run-ins with J.J. and the horsemen for the past few weeks. He finally got his title shot against Flair on the World Wide Show. It was a pretty decent match with Flair selling and begging for mercy. The end was interesting and something that I've not seen done. After a ref bump, Sting put Flair in the scorpion death lock. J.J. did a run in, but couldn't pull Sting off. He signaled for Arn and Tully who came running in, but were met by Barry and Lex. After a Mexican standoff (all this time, Flair is still in the hold) all the jobbers run in and separate Flair and Sting and the other horsemen end up carrying Flair off.

Information just in on a couple of things. First, the Crockett Cup. No teams have been announced yet, but the sites have. That's right. Sites. With an "s". Plural.

The semi finals (or first round) will be held in Greensville, South Carolina on Friday, April 22. The finals are on the 23rd in Greensboro, NC. No word on ticket prices or availability.

I'm told there were several reasons for the selection of these two cities. First, both cities campaigned for the

event through their chamber of commerces. Secondly, both cities are hot cities right now and even without people coming in from across the US, should sell out. Charlotte, where most of the wrestlers live, is located about halfway in between which means the wrestlers will be spending the night at home rather than partying somewhere on the road. This also allows the wrestlers to be well rested. This was one of the key reasons that Las Vegas was eliminated from contention early on. This should also satisfy the folks the folks in Crocketts' home area. Seeds will be announced in the middle to end of March.

As for the show going up against Wrestlemania on March 27, I understand there will be at least five title matches plus a barbed wire six man tag between the Road Warriors and Dusty against Ivan Koloff, the Warlords, and the Barbarian (I refuse to call them by that stupid name-Powers of Pain.) Ted Turner is behind this and that's a story in itself.

Crockett signed a five year deal with Turner and Ted has decided that the war with Titan is his war as well. Turner's the type of guy they need as he's not afraid to play dirty (or maybe I should say "play ugly") and meet McMahon on his own terms. If Turner does in fact take an active interest, this could turn into the most interesting battle wrestling has ever seen. And here's why:

Ted Turner not only owns TBS, he also has major league baseball and basketball teams that get watched by bunches upon bunches of people. He can run in conjunction with them and give wrestling some credibility. Combine that with the fact that Turner controls a major portion of the national media with his Cable News Network, he could conceivably plug the hell out of the TBS show there and completely ignore Wrestlemania. Now THAT might make a dent in McMahon's wallet.

We'll be seeing some new faces in the next few weeks. Tommy Rogers and Bobby Fulton, the Fantastics, have been announced coming in. I guess that tells you what the Rock and Roll Express chances of returning are.

There's an outside chance that we might see Steve Williams back again with Crockett. I guess he's checked out all his other options and decided what he had in the NWA wasn't that bad after all. Dusty's not jumping at the chance to sign him though.

I was talking with someone who used to be with the UWF the other day and I was finally given the low down on why Steve Williams is such a schitophrenic wrestler (i.e., one day he's great, the next, he sucks.) The story I get is that he is very moody. His attitude in the ring depends very much on who the last person he talked to was. If he talked with someone who was upbeat and positive, he had a good match. If he

talked with someone else who had an attitude problem or was negative, his match sucked. So why did Doc always have good matches when he worked for Watts? Well, the old Cowboy treated his wrestlers like a coach treats his players. Constantly he was on them to do a better job and to get more out of them. In Doc's case Watts was on him like ugly on a bear. A lot of the wrestlers hated Watts for this and do to this day, but he had their respect. Totally. If Doc does go back to work for Crockett, someone needs to buy him a copy of Zig Ziglar's "See You At The Top". With his ability, if he reads and understood this book, he'd be one of wrestling's hottest properties.

Shane Douglas is back and will get a decent push. He's going to be touted as a former rookie of the year (as far as I know, we're the only publication to name him that, but Dusty would have kittens if that ever got on the air) and they are going to be hinting at the fact that he's been working out with Magnum and has learned his belly to belly suplex. That's okay; I was wondering if they would ever go in that direction, but the only thing that I'm cowering in fear of is that David Crockett may get to yell "BELLYTOBELLY!" at us again.

Ron Simmons looked like he might have quietly turned heel on last week's broadcast, as his ring style was aggressive to say the least. However, on a subsequent interview, Arn Anderson came out and gave him a hard time, calling him "Boy" which he didn't take too kindly too. The was no physical altercation, but it looked like it for a bit.

Here's some more on the "Clash of the Champions" that they'll be doing opposite Wrestlemania. Tentatively scheduled will be Flair vs Sting in a 60 minute time limit match. Should the match go the time limit, there will be three judges (just like in boxing) at ringside to decide the winner. Also, Tully and Arn vs Lex and Barry for the Tag titles. Basically, every title Crockett has will be put up on this show along with the tag team barbed wire match so the lineup is hot going up against the not so hot Wrestlemania tournament.

Tommy Rogers and Robby Fulton have been announced as coming in and they should be starting this next week. I don't know if this is good or bad, because a lot of people may just see them as a clone of the Rock and Roll Express and that particular gimmick may have run its course. Personally, I like the Fantastics and think they'll be a welcome addition, but how the fans take to them is something different. Shoot, if I could predict who the fans would like and who they wouldn't, I wouldn't be doing a newsletter and working in a factory...I'd be a booker somewhere. No thanks...I'll stick to making rubber hose.

Great match on TBS this weekend between the Lightening Express and the Shepherders. The workrate was as good as you'll see on TV and except for the ending seeming to be a bit confused, it was in the B+ range of my ratings. Horner had one of the Sheeps pinned and the ref went to count the fall (they had collided with Horner falling on top). The other Sheep got in the ring, and instead of the ref continuing the count, he just stopped half way down on the third count and went to rush the other Sheep from the ring. Dumb. It got good though with Johnny Ace getting on the ring apron and distracting the ref while the other sheep sneaked in and rolled his partner out of the ring while he took over and started to pin Tim. Brad Armstrong jumped in and stopped the ref's hand from coming down for the third time and all four got into it. Tim caught one of the sheeps in rolling reverse and while Brad and the other brawled outside. Ace then jumped in the ring and hit Tim with the flagpole to result ing aDQ.

If you liked this type of match, you're going to love the new set up. Saturday's evening show will be the same, taped from the TBS studios. Sunday's show however, will be from an arena with top notch matches. As it was explained to me, the Saturday show will be the one they use to sell tickets. Sunday's show will be done just as a TV show with little hype. Done especially for the fans. Hey! Things are starting to turn around here and fast. It's about time!

My thanks also go out here to a bunch of newbies from the NWA. We're starting to get some cooperation from here so hopefully we won't have some of the erroneous info we've had in the past. Crockett seems to be listening to the fans more and more through the newsletters and we're glad to be of any help we can. Someone asked me this past week if we mind being a "free" consultant to them. Nope. We get paid \$2.50 a month plus have a bunch of fun doing it.

One last thing. Road Warrior Animal did about the best interview of his life by stepping out of character to talk about his eye injury. It's been said before that if you want someone's attention, whisper. Because it was done on tape, he might not have known it, but he held the fans in the palm of his hand during that one!

P E N C I L P O I N T S

EMILY'S BACK

I can't understand this thing about Dusty Rhodes and the blackmail. How does the post office deliver it? If the mail is black it would be awfully hard to see the ink for an address. I suppose they could use white ink or even white out, but then again, all the envelopes I've ever seen are white...or sometimes pink if I go to the fancy stationary store. Maybe Babydoll dropped the letter in mud before she delivered it because I heard somebody talking about the letter containing dirty pictures. Can the post office really deliver mail like that?

Also I wanted to thank you for the dictionary of wrestling words in last issue. Now I understand when Dusty pushes someone extra hard, they always seem to wind up falling flat on their face. I'll write again.

-EMILY LATRELLA-

-New York-

EDITOR: HAVE I EVER MENTIONED THAT THERE'S THIS GUY OUT IN CAMPBELL, CALIFORNIA WHO WOULD JUST LOVE TO GET LETTERS FROM YOU???

KUDOS TO THE PHANTOM

Kudos to Ed Garea for his commentary (Vol 3, Issue 3)-with all the money and power Vince McMahon has, you'd think he would use that to start "imitating a sport" a whole lot more. Vince has the ability to pick up more wrestlers of the Steamboat/Dibiase/Bret Hart quality, and if he can obtain the Jumping Bomb Angels what should stop him from trying to grab a few good Japanese Male Wrestlers? What should stop Titan from making itself more like the Old Mid-South/UWF, New/All Japan, Memphis and Crockett at their best? I guess Vince is content enough to be what he is now, and even if some of the current Titan product can be great at times, it ought to be a whole lot more Consistently great, oh yeah, don't forget to Axe Junkyard Dog, Hickbilly Jim and Outback Jack too, Vince.

As for JCP, a recent Observer letter probably said it best-Crockett should've just hired Bill Watts than buying out and destroying the UWF. If the cowboy had replaced Dusty as Booker, Jim and David wouldn't have been going through the problems they have had and would at least been a close number two to Titan.

-Bob Shepherd-

-Abington, MA-

ON JANUARY DIPSTICK

I'm writing this letter in regards to your choice for dipstick for the month of January. I personally believe that Vince McMahon is a poor choice to receive this "honor". You emphasised that the dipstick was granted to someone in the business who was doing something stupid. I wouldn't really call McMahon's stealing ideas from Crockett stupid. Unethical maybe, but definitely not stupid. In actuality, it would be pretty dumb of McMahon if he didn't take advantage of these opportunities. Sure, he could be a nice guy and schedule hid pay-per-view events so that the fans could watch Crockett's at the sametime, but why should he? The networks don't do it, and neither would JCP if they were in Titan's position. Having his special events on different nights than Crockett would give him the foothold that he's looking for. Maybe if people within the NWA had used these tactics a few years ago instead of ignoring McMahon they'd still be number one today.

-Michelle Johnson-

-Watertown, NY-

EDITOR: WHEN WE AWARDED VINCE THE JANUARY DIPSTICK, IT WAS DONE PARTLY TONGUE IN CHEEK, BUT MOSTLY ON THE LEVEL. IN THIS PARTICULAR INSTANCE, IT WAS AWARDED FOR HIS CHILDISH BEHAVIOR (SOMETHING YOUR DEAR EDITOR COULD NEVER BE ACCUSED OF...AND IF YOU DO, I'LL TELL MY MOMMY) IN COPYING EVERYTHING CROCKETT HAD PLANNED. IF THE WWF IS SO MUCH BETTER THAN THE NWA, THEN VINCE SHOULD BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH NEW AND ORIGINAL ANGLES (LIKE THE TWIN REFEREE BIT). STOOPING TO THE LEVEL OF YOUR NEAREST COMPETITOR IS BUSH LEAGUE...NOT MAJOR LEAGUE.

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO...YOUR IDEA?

I liked the idea you had a few issues back about "what ever happend to" certain wrestlers and what they are doing nowadays. I've not seen anything more on it though. What happened?

-ERIC HOYME-

-Indianapolis, IN-

EDITOR: BASICALLY THE IDEA IS DEAD UNTIL WE HEAR FROM SOME READERS WITH RESPONSES. WHAT I WANTED TO DO WAS A COLUMN EVERY THREE MONTHS OR SO DEALING WITH WHAT RETIRED WRESTLERS WERE DOING NOW. ONE IN PARTICULAR WE'RE HUNTING FOR IS COWBOY BOB ELLIS. IF YOU ALL KNOW OF A WRESTLER WHO IS DOING SOMETHING NOW THAT HE'S RETIRED, LET US KNOW WHAT. WE'LL STILL PLAN ON THIS PROVIDING THERE'S ENOUGH INTEREST (E.G. RONNIE ETCHINSON RUNS A BAR IN ST. JOSEPHS, MO). WORKING NAME OF THE COLUMN IS, "OLD WRESTLERS NEVER DIE, THEY JUST BECOME..."

WORLD CLASS STILL DOOMED

I'm not certain why all this praise is being lavished upon the World Class area. The show has not improved all that much and I don't see where crowds have picked up all that much. They've got this sudden influx of talent, but unless they start drawing, there's going to be no way to pay the workers. Without pay, they start going back to the other promotions. I don't understand what's holding Mantell back from going back to the old Mid South/UWF area where Watts held court and either start promoting there, or just face the fact that the whole purchase was a bad idea and they'll never get anywhere.

-NAME WITHHELD-

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE MACHO MAN

Everyone at work thinks that either Hulk Hogan or Ted DiBiase is going to come out of the tournament with the WWF belt. But wouldn't it make sense that since Savage didn't get the Intercontinental on the Friday Night's Main Event show, they just might give it to him and let him feud with DiBiase? You said yourself that Randy is the guy to lead them into the 90's. Why not start in 1988?

-KEN SCHUMAKER-

-Philadelphia, PA-

WHY?

Your last letters' column made a lot of sense about national magazines. It seems that you either have to be a giant to get covered or an independent in the publisher's backyard. How's come?

EDITOR: BIG NAMES SELL MAGAZINES...MEMPHIS, CONTINENTAL, PACIFIC NORTHWEST SELL MAGS ONLY IN THEIR AREAS. THE INDEPENDENT, ESPECIALLY THOSE ON THE EAST COAST, ARE EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLISHERS AND THUS THEY GET PRESS, I GUESS. ANYONE ELSE GOT AN ANSWER?

MEMPHIS

I thought that I was getting an obscene phone call. The caller was panting and huffing to the point that I thought he was going to have a heart attack. Then I figured out what must be happening. Missy Hyatt has showed up in Memphis. She's in with Doug Gilbert and I understand that Eddie is headed in as well. I hope that this means the resurgence of Hyatt-Hot Stuff International, but who knows.

Things here really seem to be not only disorganized as of late, but also somewhat boring as well. Now how can I say that when you've got the Midnight Rockers feuding with the Rock and Roll Express? I'll get to that after a short explanation.

Talent flow is something here. People are leaving almost as soon as they get here and from those that I've talked to, the reason all boils down to money. One top name reportedly got paid a measly \$75 for one week. The wrestlers figure that with the good crowd in Memphis along with the bucks supplied by the Renegades tobacco people and the windfall from the Financial News Network, that they should be sharing in some of the profits. Most come from some of the bigger promotions like Crockett where they were making decent money. The small time just doesn't pay, so they start looking almost after getting their first paycheck. Nobody else wants the guys they're giving a chance to like Gary Young or Max Paine, so those guys are there working for whatever they can. Memphis is paying the Rock and Roll Express well for their short stay (which may turn into an extended stay), but a lot of the guys simply aren't happy with the payoffs. This situation is almost like the booking in Crockett's group. There, friends and buddies of Dusty get the big push. Here, the in crowd gets the good pay.

So why is the Rock and Roll Wars boring? It's not that they aren't having good matches because from all reports they are. It's just that because of the talent flow as of late, they didn't have time to develop the angle which would have really popped a good crowd. How about the Rockers beating the living snot out of Todd Morton on TV to set up the angle. Todd claims he's Ricky's cousin. Instead they go right for the main event type feuds in case someone involved decides to leave.

They held up the titles between the two teams as a result of the 2/15 match there that we mentioned last issue. The referee scheduled took a bump and a replacement came in. The problem was that both referees were healthy enough to count a pinfall and both referees had different winners. The show which is taking place wherever these two teams wrestle across the territory. I'm told that these are some of the best matches the area has seen. Also we were right...the arrogance is so thick you can cut it with a foreign object.

Brother Earl is still around surprisingly. His act has been really toned down but he is still getting major league heat just from his first week on the TV show. He doesn't have to do anything at ringside except just stand there to draw heat here in the Bible belt.

Bill Dundee, despite getting a lot of coverage from the new USA promotion out of Knoxville (TN) has decided to stay with Memphis at least for now. Part of that decision has to do with him liking to be home and not on the road all the time and he lives in the Nashville area. By the way, the USA group is claiming that Dundee is here on a special visa to defend his Australian title.

Tommy Rich's stint here lasted less than two weeks as he's gone already. I guess they were just trying to rekindle the feud from last summer that drew so well. I didn't work either from a wrestling standpoint or from a drawing standpoint either.

THE PHANTOM OF THE RING
BY ED GAREA

THE MELTZER EFFECT-In every generation, there has been a dominant wrestling publication, and journalist. During the Twenties and Thirties it was Marcus Griffin. During the Forties and Fifties, it was Dan Parker and his columns. During the sixties, it was Nat Loubet and Ring Wrestling, not to mention Uncle Bert Ray and his Matmania. During the seventies, it was a struggle between Norman Kietzer and his Wrestling News-Revue-Ring, and the maverick journalist Tom Burke and his Global Wrestling. Now, in the eighties, the talk all seems to be of one bulletin and one editor: The Wrestling Observer and its editor, Dave Meltzer. The strange thing about it all is that as far as we've come, the more we have stood still. Except for my little pieces in Wrestling Eye when I used to work as the Fan Club Column editor, no one has really taken a look at Dave and his journal. Outwardly, this is strange indeed, but not when one looks at the business and its literature. The Wrestling Eye was (and perhaps still is) the only magazine to carry a fan club column. This used to be a staple in old wrestling magazines. Ring Wrestling, the old Wrestling Revue, and the Kietzer magazines all carried a column plugging fan clubs and bulletins because they realized in their rational sanity that these clubs and publication were the very backbones of wrestling itself; a way for fans to be heard and be in touch with each other. They realized that these publications were not competition, but rather an enhancement to their publication. Today, magazines (do I ever use that term loosely) view bulletins and clubs as threats to their egomaniacal sandcastles, as do the promoters, to whom the magazines shine-up. My experiences with the Wrestling Eye in this regard should shed some light on the reasons.

When I became involved with the Eye, I suggested a fan club column, much in the manner that Nat Loubet had with Ring Wrestling and which Norman Kietzer continued via such capable editors as George Schire and Tom Burke. These columns were as entertaining as informative and served what I felt was an effective nationwide fan network. To make the Eye a serious magazine, I felt it was necessary to carry such a column. To my delight, Mike Bellew (the founder and then-editor of the Eye) agreed. We made the column a serious one, involving and plugging all bulletins that came our way. This column was a lot of fun to do and through it I made a good number of friends, including Jon Gallagher himself.

I knew Dave long before I ever did the column; in fact, I knew him since he first published the Observer in 1982. The Observer back then was quite unlike the polished product we know today. Back then it was an 8½x14 xeroxed fan bulletin. But it was different. It was the first bulletin that really took a serious look at the game. It pulled no punches, buried no bodies, made no excuses. Among fan bulletins it came to have a cult status because of its bizarre honesty. The other thing it had going for it was the fact that the editor is a bona fide journalist, and honest-to-goodness sports reporter. Also within the pages of the early Observer was the writings of one Mr. Mike, a truly unique fellow and possibly the most entertaining wrestling writer I've ever read. It is a shame that he is not doing this anymore; if only Mr. Mike would get together with Uncle Burt Ray, what a bulletin they could produce.

In my first column I reported that, sad to say, the Observer had gone out of business. Dave wrote back to inform me that the bulletin had taken on a new form and was only on a hiatus. Thank goodness for that. To increase readership, we did an interview that got Dave a good response (in the hundreds) and I never stopped plugging the publication until I left the Eye. But as good as I thought Dave's publication was, and still is, I could see the effect it was having upon other bulletins. In the first place, many people wrote in to say that Dave's bulletin was so good, why buy anything else. In response to that I began to heavily feature other bulletins in the column just to keep a competitive balance. One should never limit oneself to just one bulletin, for

reasons I shall elaborate on later in this article. In the second place, I began to be flooded by what I would dub "the invasion of the Meltzer clones." Every other bulletin I received seemed to be an Observer in miniature. They looked like the Observer, they wrote in the Observer style, they even tried to do the same coverage and opinion the Observer did. The only difference was the main one-quality. Whereas Dave could give an opinion and sound authoritative in doing so, the others merely came off as pompous self-inflated windbags. One other thing I learned in my stint was that in speaking with other fan club and bulletin editors, there was a lot of jealousy and resentment harbored towards Dave and the Observer. That is only natural given their positions and limited perspective. Of course, I already knew the promoters hated Dave; that is as natural as Baby Face Nelson hating J. Edgar Hoover. There was a lot of criticism of Dave, but none of it objective. What will follow here will be the first (at least to my knowledge) objective critique of the Observer. If the reader is looking for a hatchet job, he or she may just as well stop here.

The strengths of the Observer are many: good writing, improved format, comprehensive coverage of what it does cover, and a balanced editorial view. An extremely strong point in favor of the bulletin is the distancing of the editor from personal relationship with the wrestlers and promoters. Were this to happen, the quality of the bulletin would deteriorate immeasurably, for facts would be sacrificed in favor of not hurting someone's feelings. Loyalty is one of the strongest emotions known to man. I hear criticism that there is too much coverage of Japan (in my opinion, there is not enough coverage of Japan), and the print is small and hard to read (negligible.) If that's the extent of it, then Dave doesn't have that much to worry about.

However, there are weaknesses. For one thing, the perspective of the bulletin seems limited to the U.S., Canada, and Japan. There is wrestling going on in Central and South America, England, Europe, Asia, and Australia. One of the hotbeds of wrestling right now is South Africa, where wrestling is seen in terms of the official policy of apartheid. A big story the Observer missed was the introduction of pro wrestling into Hungary, the first time wrestling has penetrated the Iron Curtain, and the government's scheduling of it on Sunday mornings to draw people away from Church services. Another weakness is the lack of historical perspective, though in this case I can't be too hard on Dave, for there is only so much space and current news should always come first. In fairness to Dave, he has a solid knowledge of the history of professional wrestling, unlike other editors who believe that professional wrestling began sometime in the 1970s and that it was Karl Gotch who fought George Hackenschmidt for the title.

Overall, Dave's influence on the game has been overwhelmingly beneficial, though some bulletins have folded during his tenure due to his popularity. Bob Closson actually stated in his farewell that it was difficult to publish a monthly bulletin when Dave reported the news every week. Of course, there was no blame or fingers pointed. Bob just stated a fact, besides, we should keep in mind that he also attributed his leaving to the debts he piled up during the bulletin's run. (A good warning for all you would-be editors who think this is all easy.) Thus, it was economics, and not anything else that led to Bob folding his bulletin. (Before I get nasty letters, just let me make clear that Bob in no way blamed Dave for the demise of his bulletin. Okay?) But for every one who falls by the wayside, there are others to take up the cudgel. As everyone must know by now, Ray Whebbe Jr. will take over Mat Results, a most welcome piece of news in this corner, for I believe Ray to be one of the best and most entertaining writers on the scene today. But I shall miss Bob greatly nonetheless; people of his quality are very hard to replace indeed. But lets all give Ray our support and best wishes. Competition makes us all the better. Besides all that, it makes sense to subscribe to more than one bulletin for the simple fact that it can't hurt to have more than one viewpoint. Never get your news from just

one source; that can hurt in the long run.

Now, the '87 Yearbook should officially mark the fifth anniversary of the Observer; will it be around for another five years? I would think so, as long as the editor keeps his interest. But what I would really like to see is Dave Meltzer at the helm of his own magazine. I have always stated that this business needs another magazine like the old Ring Wrestling; Dave would be the perfect choice to run such a venture. One can already see that the Observer is straining at the seams and the natural expansion into a magazine makes all the sense in the world. My only wish is that some publisher would wake up and do the right thing—offer Dave a magazine. He has often stated to me that he would want no part of a magazine, but I could not see him walking away from a magazine over which he would have total control, for that would be the price to get him to do one. Here's hoping.

P.S. One last question: Where do I rank the Observer in the history of fan publications? This may come as a shock to most, but the answer is: second. Who could be first? A sixties bulletin put out by a character called Uncle Burt Ray and called Matmania. This was a bulletin of results and inside information, and published before the wonderful age of cable (Was there ever such a time?) Imagine how difficult it was to report on happening in other territories, especially as there were so many more at that time; we sometimes forget the consolidation of the eighties. Uncle Burt also told us who was who; George Steele's real name was revealed before he first came to the WWF in 1967. There was also inside information on arrests and most of Uncle Burt's editorials focused on much the same issues that are talked about today. Uncle Burt was truly the granddaddy of them all, and it's time he received his proper due. Here's to you, Uncle Burt, wherever you are.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE part 1

THE RING

About a year or so ago, someone wrote to me asking about different tool of the trade and how they were used. I made some of the most interesting discoveries; not only did I not know the answers to a lot of the questions, I couldn't find anyone to talk about them openly.

The main questions concerned the ring itself: How is it constructed? What is it made out of? How is it set up? Does it hurt to get bodyslammed? Why are some rings more bouncy than others? Is the mat padded? What makes the crashing sound so loud when someone is slammed or even just stomps on the mat? Like I said, not a whole lot of people wanted to talk about it and I still can't figure out why. The same people who I talk to and find out about title changes before they happen, the same people who talk openly about high spots and blading, the same people who answer almost any question I have, avoided questions about the ring.

That's the reason it took so long to put this story together. After Titan cards, I tried to hang around the Peoria Civic Center to watch them tear down the ring figuring that I could just reverse the process and give you a story on construction. Even from the upper balconies, ushers always came along to run me off before they got too involved. Even at a Central States spot show last October in a sleepy little town of 1000 people, I was asked to leave. Going as far back as high school when the AWA promoted right here in Knoxville, members of the letter club were allowed to help set up chairs, but the ring construction was done under lock and key. I finally got my chance to watch the construction of a ring while working the Chicago show with Eddie Sharkey's group. I still don't know what the big secret is, but here's the story. I should mention that one wrestler did send me details on the ring about

six months ago, but his explanations just didn't make sense since I hadn't seen the actual construction. Anyway, here's how he ring works.

They start with the four corner posts. Each post has a small platform that it rest on. All four posts are set up and a cable links them making an X through the middle. Around the perimeter are supports that look almost like a bed frame. Dead in the center of what will be the ring is possibly the most important part and one that about 90% of you probably didn't realize existed. It's a canister that has a big truck spring on the inside! This is what gives the ring bounce. Depending on the spring itself determines the bounce. Sometimes, the spring is omitted and then the ring becomes a boxing ring and you don't see a whole lot of bumps, slams or any thing else. A lot of independents don't use the ring, and that accounts for lack of action. Figure A shows the construction thus far.

On the inside of the ring, more of a bed frame is then constructed. One goes through the center dividing the ring in half. More are put up to divide the ring again, this time into eight equal sections (we're constructing a 16' x 16' ring here). Inch plywood in 4 x 8 sheets is then laid in each section and secured (Figure B). The deck is then complete.

On top of the plywood goes a pad that will vary from half an inch to two inches. It must be smoothed out. On top of that goes a canvas cover that for the most part works to hide the padding. This canvas cover is then tied to the frame to prevent shifting.

Ring ropes go up next. They are steel cables that are covered with either a plastic or a rubber covering. They are in one continuous loop that already have the turnbuckles and pads attached. The turnbuckles are then attached to the ring posts and tightened to the point of giving a good bounce. If they are too tight, they won't flex enough to allow wrestlers to step into the ring. If they are too loose, a wrestler can hurt himself when coming off the ropes.

Because of the construction of the ring, most bumps are taken near the middle because of the give it has there. Bumps toward the ropes hurt a little more and bumps taken on the ring apron itself are the most painful. The apron is the most solid part of the ring because it is furthest away from the all important spring.

The ring then will have a banner strung around it from the mat to the arena floor to cover the underneath from view. This will create a mini echo chamber and sometimes the arena itself, especially a high school gym, will increase the loudness when the mat is thumped or stomped. Other times, a microphone will be placed under the ring with a speaker to increase the sound. The sound along with the correct selling will make the illusion of a punch look and sound more real.

Other than the spring, I can't see where any of this could be considered "top secret stuff". But the next time you watch a match, watch where the bumps are taken and how much bounce the ring has.

In future Forums, we will take a look at other tools of the trade including painful looking holds and other things that you may have questions about. Let us know and we'll find out what we can about it.

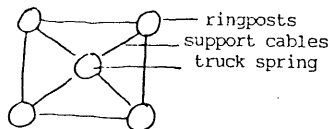


figure A

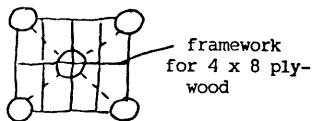


figure B

16

CLASS ACT OF THE MONTH

For the first time in recent memory, we have several worthy candidates for our Class Act Award. Usually, there's only one or two nominees. Here are this month's:

First Jim Crockett and crew. Somebody came to their senses and stopped the practice of ending matches in progress. Not only that, but the quality of matches shown on his World Wide Show as of late have been excellent. Mr. Crockett and his staff deserve the recognition and they are one of our runners up.

Road Warrior Animal's story is detailed in the NWA report. The class that he had to go ahead and film an angle with an injury such as his says something about his dedication to JCP, the fans, and his fellow wrestlers.

Also on our list of runners-up is Vince McMahon and Titan Sports. They have been honoring Mad Dog Vachon throughout the mid west with cards presented in his honor. While I'm sure the idea was profit-motivated, the thought of honoring the Dog in his old stomping ground is still pretty classy.

The winner this month will come as a shock to some of you. We're naming Jim Ross and the WFIA as our Class Act. They produced a long awaited membership magazine last week and mailed it to all 1987 members. We can overlook the fact that it was six months late and that they took 14 months to fulfill 3/4 of their promised material. The fact is, they could have just decided to start over again on January 1st and forgotten us that refuse to renew. This award doesn't change a thing about the way we feel about the WFIA. In fact, we'll consider that magazine to be the first shot in the Fan Club War of 88.

DIPSTICK OF THE MONTH
FEBRUARY 1988

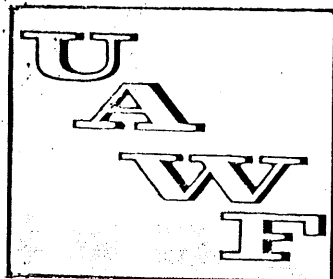
Our choice here was not as hard as it has been; Only two nominees and the winner came by a landslide.

Our runner up this month is Verne Gagne for not doing what the WWF is doing with Mad Dog Vachon tributes. After all, the Dog spent all but the last year or so working for Gagne and the AWA. It would only seem appropriate to have honored Vachon, at least at the 2/4 old timers' card in Minneapolis. Not touring the AWA territory is excuseable, just because they don't have a territory anymore and besides...they're reorganizing.

The winner this month is Kevin Sullivan. I touched on this last issue, but now I have permission to expand on it a bit.

As you know Nikita Kholoff is taking some time off from wrestling. I can now tell you it's due to illness in his family. Well, Sullivan during his interviews has been doing somewhat of a shoot by laying the blame on Nikita. This goes beyond the bounds of good taste, let alone, acceptable interview techniques. Dusty has control over what is said on the air and this is one time he should have exerted control.

So, on the count three everybody, a big Bronx cheer for Kevin One, two....



United Association of Wrestling Fans

P.O. Box 215

Galesburg, Illinois 61402

START SOMETHING GREAT IN MEMPHIS

The first annual convention of the United Association of Wrestling Fans will be October 7-11, 1988 in Memphis, Tennessee.

We will be announcing more and more particulars as we go along, but we wanted to get the date as soon as possible so that you could make plans ahead of time.

October may seem to be a strange time to have a convention, and our reasoning needs to be explained. We worked closely with the Memphis Visitors and Convention Bureau in choosing dates. We were told that July in Memphis, is brutally hot. The promotion itself steered us away from a July date. August, which was our original choice, was not a good choice due to Elvis fans making a mass pilgrimage to Memphis. Hotel rooms run as much as three times the normal rate in August. October was the next available date that the Convention Bureau could assist with. We ended up choosing the 7th-11th because it's a holiday weekend for a lot of people. I still would have preferred July or August because that's when my "pre set" vacation is and I'll have to take an unpaid leave of absence in October, but we went with what we felt was best for the majority.

Hotel selection will be made as well as an itinerary. Free time will be available to visit Graceland, the Riverfront or shopping. A live card on Monday night at the Mid South Coliseum is on the agenda as well as a Saturday morning TV taping at the Channel 5 studios. We also plan on a banquet that will feature induction ceremonies to Wrestling's Ring of mortals and hopefully Memphis wrestlers. Video tape parties, displays and other activities will also be available. This is YOUR convention... let us know what you'd like to see.

Meanwhile, the 1st edition of the UAWF magazine will be coming out around the 1st of April. Want ads are \$1.25 for members and 50¢ per word for non members. Also if you'd like to be listed on our video exchange (for trading tapes only...selling tapes go in the want ads) send us a letter saying so. Display ads, are also available...phone me for details.

If you haven't joined yet, now's the time. Dues are \$15.00 for a single membership and \$2.00 for any additional members of your family. If you want additional information on the UAWF, just send a SASE to Box 215, Galesburg, IL 61402

Start something great in Memphis...with the UAWF!!

QUOTES WORTH REMEMBERING

WFIA's Jim Ross (on his organization's lack of communication): "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem." January 1987.
Jon Gallagher, UAWF Chairman: "Jim Ross, we just became your biggest problem. we just became your worst nightmare." On forming the UAWF, October 1987.

CALGARY STAMPEDE

somehow I feel compelled to write about the United States only winning six medals, but I'll refrain and stick to what's going on here in the wrestling world.

Because of the Olympics, they did have to move the weekly shows from their regular arena to a smaller one. The tourist trade didn't help any and as a matter of fact, the regulars at the matches were busy doing other things like watching Olympic events, selling souvenirs and I don't know what all. As soon as all the hoopla is over we should see things return to almost normal.

Feuds right now involve Jason the Terrible and Steve DiSalvo who has been bouncing back and forth between babyface and heel. Referee Wayne Hart is feuding with heel ref Akham Singh (what's with all these Singhs? Can't they come up with some other foreign sounding name?).

Leo Burke was in for just a short time but he has left now to do NWA commentary in French in Quebec.

There are a lot of rumors as to newcomers as well. Brad Rheingans (whens the last time you heard that name?) has been negotiating and Steve Williams' name is being bantied around. Then again, everyone is saying something about Steve Williams and I don't even think at this point Steve knows what his next move is going to be. Suni War Cloud is also on his way in this week.

Owen Hart returned from a Japan trip and while over there he hurt his back. As I understand it, it's not that serious of an injury and he'll be back to working this week. By the way, Trent sent me my first tape of Owen and I'm going to try to get around to watching it by next issue. I'm told that my mouth will be permanently locked open for a week.

The love affair between this promotion and the WWF seems to be over. There's several different stories going around as to why and i'll try to get the low down by next issue. Meanwhile, Calgary is in the process of trying to bring Ric Flair into the area to defend against Owen. From what little I've seen of Owen, I think that's a match I'd pay a whole bunch of money to see.

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

Let's take care of some unfinished business from last time...we reported that someone who was involved in Hogan's match from the 2/5 show was late getting to the arena but we didn't know who. I now have the answer: Mr. Hogan himself. Seems that Mrs. Hogan (Linda) was along for the tour. Being with child, she had some morning sickness back at the hotel and Hulk stayed a little bit too long. Can you imagine what must have been going through Vince McMahon's mind? Here's Honky Tonk refusing to do a job on national TV for Savage, and now, Hogan's late. If that wouldn't give you an ulcer, I don't know what would!

By the way, several have been asking who came up with the finish of the Hogan-Andre match. Credit Hogan himself and Jules Strongbow with the ending.

Hype for Wstestlemania is well underway. With the show less than a month away, it can't do anything but get hotter. The 3/20 Springfield, IL taping will have all the past WMIV stuff so I don't expect much to happen there. It'd be pretty dumb to set up any angles on one of the syndicated shows because they take a month off after the show anyway.

I screwed up on the date of the next Saturday night's Main Event... it will be taped in Nashville on the 7th of March and broadcast the following Saturday night, 3/12. On the card will be Hogan vs Race, DiBiase (should be good)-Andre vs Bam Bam (huh?) and more. Should be some angles to finalize Wrestlemania with it being that close.

Brutus Beefcake has been telling anyone who'll listen (I know, because every night, someone calls who has talked to Brutus) that he'll be working Wrestlemania against Honky Tonk Man. When pressed for more info (like "why?" "what's the angle?") he doesn't seem to know anything else. In the same vein Ted DiBiase, who is usually very open with smart fans, is tight lipped. Hmmm

A couple of celebrities have been announced for Wrestlemania and it looks like this year they will again keep it to a minimum. Bob Wecker will make his second appearance and Vanna White has been signed in some capacity... maybe she'll be involved in a "turn". Get it? Letters....turn? Oh never mind!

We're going to see a six man tag match at WMIV with the Islanders and Bobby Heenan against the British Bulldogs and Koko B Ware. I thought Koko had been forgotten about. Come to think about it, I guess he has been.

Other matches on the March 27 card will include Strike Force defending belts against Demolition. The only reason I can see a title change here is so that McMahon's Road Warriors can get belts before the real ones do. No real feud has been established, so this may be the beginning.

Here's one we've been waiting for...the ultimate dingbat will be taking on Hercules. Not only were we subjected to part of a televised chain match (it lasted all of ten seconds because these two were so stong they broke the chain on the first pull), but we also had to sit through two of the WORST interviews of all time. I don't recall Dingbat doing all that much talking in the past and know I know why. I don't mean to honk my own horn (as Arn Anderson says) but, "Toot, toot". I can do a better interview than these two guys!

How is McMahon reacting to Crockett's announcement? He ain't too happy, that's for sure. A free show on TBS will put a dimple in his pay per view as most people are set with a VCR and will record one and watch the other. If this had been just a Pay Per View event, say like the Survivor series, it might have hurt a LOT. Wrestlemania is just too big though. I should put a large crimp in his closed circuit gate though...the past three years I've paid \$15.00 a head to see the thing and when you've got people who are as tight as I am, they'll opt forr the free show and wait for the video cassette. Wrestlemania will still be a giant success...but I would imagine that Crockett has just cost McMahon somewhere between a half to a million bucks.

I guess the amazing thing about all this is how well Crockett was able to keep it a secret and take McMahon completely by surprise. I talked to someone within the WWF about this move and they said that it will truly be the beginning of a war. Crockett has hurt them by taking legal action preventing Big Bubba Rogers from wrestling for them and that ticked them off a little. This one even more. Word is that Vince will fire with all guns when they do another talent raid and no expense will be spared. I don't know about you, but I'm looking forward the the remainder of 1988.

Iron Sheik is back after a long absence. Apparently they have forgiven his drug bust with Jim Duggan last year. He may not get a big push, but at least he isn't having to put up with World Class paychecks. The nine months or so he was off probably has served as enough punishment and with the random drug testing that goes on here, I would guess that he won't try anything like that again. I'll also bet that if Duggan ever offers him a ride, he'll take a cab.

What ever happened to the WWF ice cream bars? Are they available anywhere? They were in this area for a short while, but I haven't seen them in a long time.

This is interesting...I just talked with Fred Wall up in Ontario Canada and he says that they are still planning on a Saturday night's main Event taping there in Hamilton on the 13th. Now I know Vince is a genius with video tape but doing the taping one night after the scheduled show will be a new one even on me! From what Fred tells me, WWF "president" Jack Tunney was on a radio show just the other night and a caller asked if and when the WWF was going to do a taping from there. he told the caller within the next couple of months.

The TV show up there is also making a big deal out of this upcoming card even more so than usual. There may be some very disappointed fans in Canada and that's not a good area to tick people off. Right now, that part of the country is their hottest spot.

Titan is going all out in an attempt to sell tickets to the Springfield IL show on 3/20. They've taken out ads on Peoria TV where their show used to be. This seems like a waste of money as I've been told that the show is a sellout already, or close enough to one that they won't have to worry about it. The Springfield

newspaper is covering the event will all sorts of free publicity, so maybe the ads on TV are nothing more than to draw the Peoria fans out of town so they won't even have the chance to see the NWA show. It's getting dirty, folks.

I'm trying my darnedest to stay away from speculating on Wrestlemania IV (in case you hadn't guessed through my lack of predictions), but the latest word in on a new celebrity has me wondering...Robin Leech of the Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous will be there to present the championship belt to the "new champion". I smell day old fish, I think. They want us to think it's Ted DiBiase. Right now, I don't know who's going to win and I'm not even going to venture a guess this issue.

That brings me to another topic that I'd better address. There's not a whole lot of people within the wrestling business we can trust to give us a straight story. There's a lot of people who want to see newsletter put out of business completely. That's ridiculous because I doubt if the 200 or so subscribers we have make up any kind of a known fractional amount of the wrestling fans as a whole. Still they try.

The WWF as of late have been planting a lot of stories to keep us busy. Some are so off the wall that we know they can't be true and they never see print. Others are so convincing and the logic so perfect that we fall for them. The WWF as of late seems to be on a campaign to destroy credibility within our newsletter. That's okay. They know the competition reads the Forum as well and giving lousy information to the competition is one way of getting them. It's hard to sort through the facts and the fiction, but we try. If we're wrong about something, we'll let you know as soon as we find out. By all means, if we print something that isn't right, let us know. We'll always admit our mistakes in a professional manner. But if someone has given us bad information on purpose...hey, maybe we ought to start mentioning names...that way Vince will know who's doing a good job! Play straight with us; we'll return the favor. Fair enough?

PULSE ON PORTLAND
BY GREG ANDERSON

Plenty of stuff to cover this time. First off, to correct an error in last issue's column, when talking about the Destroyer that was coming in, what I actually wrote was "Please, tell me it's NOT Dick Beyer" and and typo left the word "not" out. Well, it wasn't Mr. Beyer but a much younger man. I'm not sure who it is at this writing.

On 2/13, Rip Oliver and Moondog Moretti worked a tag bout against Coco Samoa and the Assassin. The masked man belted Oliver off the ring apron as he awaited a tag and Brian Adams, who had been at ringside, attacked Oliver and tossed him back into the ring for further punishment. Ref Sandy Barr called for the bell and a no-contest as Assassin and Samoa pulled Adams off Rip. After the match, Oliver challenged Adams to a loser-leave-town match. As Rip was due to leave once again for the WWF, my thought was that he would be losing but on the night of the bout, (match was not televised so I do not have the result at this writing), he appeared on a TV interview and Adams didn't. This used to be a good way to tell who would be leaving but it might have been done to throw us smart fans off. We'll have the result next time.

Now for a quick rundown on the results of the Frank Boninenna Memorial show on 2/16. The main event saw the AWA title "held up" (in this area only, I'm sure) by Stanley Blackburn after the Assassin interfered to deliver a loaded headbutt on Grappler after the hooded heel kicked Curt Hennig in the stomach with his loaded boot. Assassin was also "suspended". Earlier in the evening, Assassin won the battle royal to determine a new TV champion and also beat Avalanche in a mask vs. headgear match. Also Mike Miller beat Oliver in a cage to garner a title shot at Grappler on 2/27. Hennig returns on 3/5 for a rematch with Grappler.

On 2/20, Art Barr and Joey Jackson had an excellent bout which saw Barr win the only fall before the time limit in a 2 out of 3. In the second bout, Samoa had Grappler in trouble when two masked men ran in and double-teamed the Islander until Billy 2 Eagles (JesseLeon) made the save and helped Coco drive the heels from the ring. A tag bout was set for 2/27. With all these masked men running around, you'd think this was a Mexican promotion. One of these new masked men was the Destroyer that debuted 2/16 and the other was dubbed Destroyer #2 even though Assassin was "suspended" he was around doing color commentary on 2/20 TV.

The next bout was between Avalanche and Miller and featured a botched-up finish. Avalanche pulled out brass knucks and took a swing at Miller, who ducked and took the big man down in a reverse roll-up. Miller kept trying to pin Avalanche, who continually lifted his shoulder. Mike appeared to look at ref Sandy Barr in confusion. Then Miller took the weapon away and both wrestlers stood up. As Mike threatened to clobber his foe, with the weapon, Barr got between them and struggled with Mike. Miller suddenly spun around behind Avalanche and took him down for the legal pinfall. It's like he wants everyone to know who the lead heel is.

Heading into the area on 3/5 is Mike Golden and he is being billed as "Golden Boy" Mike Golden (a bit redundant) and may even bring Fantasy (Lisa Golden) in as his valet. Don Owen may not want to pay out the extra money, however. The last (and only) time we had a valet here was in the early seventies when Cowboy Frankie Laine brought his wife Linda Lee with him and that didn't last long, either.

There will be no TV on 3/27 when Grappler and Hennig meet again and Golden debuts. A recent show in Tumwater, Washington (near Seattle) drew 40 fans. It seems that Billy Jack Haynes tried to get Vince's help in running an opposition promotion in Oregon and was refused. This, among other factors, lead to Haynes' leaving the Federation. It will be a cold day you-know-where before Billy returns to Owen promotions, however.

The reason that Hennig is appearing here again so soon is that the AWA is shutting down for a month and Verne will be shipping Curt out to here and Memphis as Curt is the only wrestler being paid during the break in operations. Abudda Dein is in Japan for Raba tour 2/20 to 3/11.

WORLD CLASS

Nothing but a lot of rumors and speculation coming out of Texas these days. Ken Mantell has been working to make a deal with Crockett so that Kevin and Kerry will go out to be in the Crockett Cup and in return Ric Flair would come to Dallas to defend the NWA title. You can see who would profit more from that proposal so Crockett has a free hand to do what he wants to in the negotiations. I don't want to start any kind of a vicious rumors, but I hope that Mr. Crockett doesn't get any urges to go shopping again.

If only it were true...the Von Erichs have been captured by aliens and taken to a far off planet never again to see a wrestling ring here on planet Earth. At least that's the plot behind a new comic book out in Texas. I hope that it doesn't see national distribution, however, if one of our readers down that way would like to send out a copy, I will reimburse you.

There was also a story recently in a Sunday supplement magazine that featured the Von Erichs. I understand that it was complimentary. Jeff Siegel spent some time in Dallas a couple of weeks ago and he tells me that the whole city knows of the Von Erichs and have pretty well fallen for the promotional propaganda they put out. That's sad.

Michael Hayes has appeared in the area, but has yet to wrestle. He has made ring appearances and he continues to play the role of the peace maker by calling for an end to the Freebird Von Erich feud. Iceman and Buddy came to the ring and a few insults were exchanged, but Terry Gordy came to the ring as well and he told Michael they were all behind him. Gordy is scheduled to leave for Japan in the next couple of weeks so anything that gets started may have to get started without him. Actually, that would set up a good angle with Iceman and Roberts beginning a feud with Michael with Gordy gone. When Gordy comes back, he would have to choose which side he wanted to be on. Opps...I'm playing booker again.

Add yet another Simpson to the family. Stu is in and I believe that he is a real brother. With this promotion, though, you never know.

The Fantastics have been announced on NWA cards, but they have yet to give notice here.

RESULTS FROM ALL OVER

2-13 SPRINGFIELD, MA (WWF) - COURTESY OF RON LEMIEUX...

Lombardi pinned Boone...Steel beat Sika by DQ...Sherri pinned Robin...
 Rude vs Steamboat DCOR...Bravo defeated Koko...Bolsheviks beat the Rogeaus...
 ...Muraco over Reed...Savage/Strike Force beat Hart Foundation/HIM...NOTES:
 Attendance 4500...best opener Ron has seen in a while...Animal and Sika
 lasted an awful two minutes...Steamboat and Rude were good, but lacked
 a constant flow...DCOR for our new readers means Double count out of
 Ring...six man tag was a cage with the team who got out first winning...
 order of departure was Santana, Neidhart, Martel, Hart, Savage...HIM
 crotched himself on top rope trying to get out.

2-14 CHICAGO (NWA) - COURTESY OF LANCE LEVINE...JT the Spider

drew Catfish Charlie...Midnight Express/Murdoch drew Jim & Ron Garvin/
 Barry Windham (C+)...Tully pinned Rick Santana (B-)...Rotunda pinned
 Nikita (C)...Road Warrior Hawk/Paul Ellering beat Barbarian/Warlord
 (B)...Dusty beat Larry Zbyszko by DQ (C)...Sting beat Flair by DQ (A-)...
 Luger pinned Arn (C)...NOTES: Attendance 5000...Nikita looked good
 and drew good heat still...Warriors' match was a ladder match with "\$50,000"
 at the top...Sullivan came to ringside with Larry Z and they used a
 coat hanger to choke Dusty...Barry mad the save...Flair had the upper
 hand throughout his match with Sting...got DQ'd by tossing him over
 the top rope...Lex vs Arn was a cage and Lex won with a small package...he
 blew up getting in the cage.

2-14 ATLANTA (NWA) - COURTESY OF DAN REILLY...Kendall Windham/

Italian Stallion drew Jive Tones (B)...Ivan Koloff pinned Ron Simmons
 (C+)...Windham/Garvins downed Midnight Express/Murdoch (A)...Sullivan
 over Santana (D)...Rotunda pinned Nikita (B+)...Hawk/Ellering over Warlord/
 Barbarian (D-)...Rhodes beat Zbyszko by DQ (C)...Flair pinned Sting
 (B+)...Lex/Ole Anderson vs Tully/Arn a no contest (B)...NOTES: Attendance:
 sold out...evening show; Chicago was afternoon...everyone on card except
 Garvins worked hard...Sullivan is ridiculously out of shape...The bag
 of cash wasn't tied very well during this ladder match and it fell during
 match...match only went about 4:00...Dusty & Z same as Chicago complete
 with coat hanger...Sting got best reaction of the night...Lex/Ole -
 Tully/Arn was in a cage...ref took bump and Flair did a run in and
 knocked out ref guarding door...horsemen did a three on two until all
 the faces ran in for save...they carried Luger out on a stretcher...
 Dusty got a tremendous reaction...he's king down here.

2-14 DETROIT (WWF) - COURTESY OF BETH SACKETT...Lombardi over

Boone...Koko by DQ over Bravo...JB Angels beat Glamour Girls...Steamboat
 & Rude DCOR...Beefcake pinned Greg Valentine...Bolsheviks beat Rogeaus...
 Outback Jack downed Iron Mike Sharpe...Hogan/Bigelow beat Andre/DiBiase...
 NOTES: Attendance; 25,000...main event went 12 minutes and saw Hogan
 tie Andre in the ropes and then leg drop Ted for the win.

2-15 CHICAGO (WWF) - COURTESY OF LANCE LEVINE...Lombardi over

Boone (C)...Koko by DQ over Bravo (C+)...Angels beat Girls (B+)...Rude
 Steamboat DCOR (C+)...Beefcake pinned Valentine (C-)...Bolsheviks downed
 Rogeaus (D)...Outback Jack over Iron Mike (F)...Hulk/Bigelow over Andre/
 DiBiase (C+)...NOTES: Attendance: 9000...note that the card was exactly
 the same as Detroit the night before...same endings as well as Beefy
 caught Greg in a small package when Greg went for the figure four...
 Andre set an all time record for being in the ring a total of 65 seconds
 instead of his usual 30 seconds...interesting that crowd chanted USA
 during Bolsheviks-Rogeaus match when only American in the ring was Boris

2-16 ALBUQUERQUE (NWA) - COURTESY OF JIMMIE KELLOGG...Larry Zbyszko beat Tim Chapp...Murdoch over Tooter Dean (I didn't make up that name)...Midnight Express drew Sting/Jim Garvin...Hawk and Ellering beat barbarian/Warlord...Luger/Barry/Dusty downed Flair/anderson/Blanchard...NOTES: Attendance 3006...Local independents were used to fill out the preliminary matches...get this...one local reportedly walked out because he wouldn't do a job for an NWA guy...Express match went 30 minutes to a draw and was best on the card...Ellering pinned Jones who wasn't even in the match...don't ask me, I don't make the rules...Dusty did his bionic elbow on all three heels plus JJ and it was all comic book stuff from there on out....also, Santana pinned Sullivan in first match.

2-17 LOS ANGELES (NWA) - COURTESY OF ROBERT READ...Santana pinned Hurricane Kid...Murdoch over Billy Anderson...Arn beat a Pat paterson (not the WWF Pat Paterson)...Express drew Sting/Garvin...Rhodes pinned Zbyszko...Hawk/Ellering beat Barbarian/Warlord...Luger/Windham by DQ over Flair/Blanchard...NOTES: Attendance 3500...Sullivan did the same angle as in Chicago and Atlanta with a run in on Dusty...Precious was a no show...Arn and Paterson had a pretty good match.

2-20 PITTSBURGH (WWF) - COURTESY OF JEFF LYNCH...Bass over Hillbilly jim...Iron Sheik beat Lanny Poffo...Ultimate Dingbat pinned Race...Bravo over JYD...Demolition over Rougeau brothers...Beefcake pinned Valentine...Angels defeated girls...DiBiase over Bigelow via COR...Jim Duggan won a battle royal...NOTES: Attendance: 6000...best match was girls tag team...Iron Sheik got good heat on his return...the battle royal was advertised as a Free For All Erawl (Bunkhouse stampede)...Lanny Poffo wore a plastic suit of armor in the ring and was bopping people with the helmet...George Steele was there but never even got in the ring...Demolition had talked on interviews about wearing their spikes into the ring, but they didn't...DiBiase and Bigelow was good while it lasted but it only went about 4:00.

2-20 NORFOLK, VA (NWA) - COURTESY OF HARVEY COBB...Tiger Conway beat Mark Flemming...Misty Blue over Linda Dallas...Shane Douglas beat Shaska Whatley...rick Steiner beat Kendall Windham...Larry Z pinned Sting...Express won over Barry Windham/Jim Garvin...Ole/Lex/Dusty beat Flair/Arn/Tully...NOTES: Attendance 8000...Baby Doll hit Sting with shoe to set up the pin...Kevin Sullivan interfered to help Express win...Magnum was at ringside and hit JJ with a baseball bat...Lex used it on Arn to get the pin

2-27 GREENSBORO (NWA) - COURTESY OF LARRY LOVELL...Santana beat Black Bart...Valiant pinned John Savage...Lightening Express over Shepherders...Jim Garvin pinned Sullivan...Ron garvin defeated Ivan...Sting over Larry Z by DQ...Barry downed Rotunda by DQ...Hawk/Ellering won the ladder match from Warlord/Barbarian...Dusty/Lex/Ole beat Flair/Arn/Tully...NOTES: Attendance 10,000...Baby Doll did run in on Sting...Varsity club came in to beat up Windham...that, I think is the first meeting of these former partners...Animal wore a hockey goalie's mask to ring and actually slammed Barbarian despite not working in the match itself....Dusty pinned Arn in the six man affair.

My apologies to those of you who sent in results that didn't get used. We tried a new mail system that just didn't work and as a result, some of those results were lost. Back to the old way from now on. Keep the results coming. We need em every issue.

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

Let's take care of last issue's trivia question. It asked, "Who was the Tag Team that the Road Warriors replaced in the old Georgia promotion (when the old team got into legal troubles)?" The answer is Matt Borne and Arn Anderson. This issue's trivia question is tricky. Who was the first champion recognized by the AWA? Answer next time.

I just got Jeff Siegel's article he's been promising and it is possibly the best and most interesting article I've read in quite a while. I didn't have room for it this time (and won't next for all of it), but I'll run it next time and the following issue. What he's written about is the organization and origination of the show we (I like that word WE) did in Chicago with Eddie Sharkey's group. The first part will deal with the concept and how he came to work with Sharkey's group and the second part will be the actual show week. For those of you who enjoyed my article on being a manager for an evening, this is an absolute must for your reading pleasure. Next issue for sure.

I've just received an advance copy of a book called "Shake, Wrestle, and Roll" by Exotic Adrian Street. I haven't had time to read it or even much more than glance through it, but I will review it next issue. I believe it will be available through the UAWF as well as through Adrian's shop in Florida. Full details as we get them. Would you believe it's printed on PINK paper?!? Naturally.

Harry White has sent me some amazing information from St. Louis. The Fox, a hotel in the city, is hosting a wrestling show on March 4th featuring a main event between Bruiser Brody and Jerry Blackwell. Long time St. Louis promoter Sam Munchnik will "crown the winner". What's interesting, or as Harry and I agree, amazing is the Fox itself. This place appears to be the classiest of classy places...not exactly the place you'd find wrestling. This will be more of a mis-match in cultures than the Beverly Hillbillies!

Buck Zumhoff is back in the news...I understand he pled guilty recently to sexually molesting a minor and is awaiting sentencing in the Minneapolis area.

We'd like to remind you also that the folks at Pro Wrestling This Week can use your help. They are trying to get on the air in New York City and they can use all the cards and letter you can write. Send your letters of support to the station they're trying to get on, WOR, New York City, NY to the attention of the program director. You don't have to live in New York to participate...WOR is a superstation so this would benefit a lot of wrestling fans across the country, maybe even you. Meanwhile, there is a station in Waterbury, CT that is available in New York that carries PWTW at 1 am. Some New Yorkers can get the station, but it's real snowy. Letter writing campaigns really work and this is a good cause.

Southern Championship Wrestling is a new promotion that we don't cover because we don't get any regular information on. They show segments of it on PWTW and they had a fun incident recently with Bruiser Brody and a mannequin. Relax...it was nothing like the infamous Flair-mannequin incident last year. Brody came to the ring with a mannequin claiming that it was Dick Slater (he had been trying to get Slater in a match but Slater wouldn't agree to one). Brody destroyed the mannequin, tearing it limb from limb, smashing the head, and piledriving the trunk. Slater came in while Brody was playing and attacked him, using the pieces of the mannequin on him. This, from what I can see from the PWTW segments is a pretty decent promotion for an independent. They look like they have fun.

In the WE ARE AWESOME, WE ARE GREAT, WE ARE ON OUR WAY TO STATE department, the Knoxville High School Blue Bullets are back on their winning ways toward the state championship playoffs. They won the regional playoffs 73-37 and now head to the sectional playoffs. State tournament will be over by next issue, but if they win, the hollerin' from Knoxville ought to be able to be heard across the country. We're now 24-2.

A quick reader request...Ron Lemeiux out in Vernon, CT is planning a Wrestlemania party. Anyone in the area is welcome to call him at (203) 872-2506 for information. I'm running a little behind on reader request, but I'll get to them soon.

Congratulations go out to JD McKay Jr. and his new bride! They were married earlier this week down in Louisville, MS. We just hope the new Mrs. McKay knows what kind of a hard core wrestling fan she hooked on to.

By the way...I've forgotten to list the number of subscribers on the cover the past two issue. It wasn't because we slipped or anything...it's just that I've been so rushed to get the bulletin out on time that I forget. Mary has been doing a lot of the typing as of late and she flat out didn't know about it. Anyway for those of you keeping track, V3I2 had 208 and last issue V3I4 had 217. Thank you one and all. We should be able to hit 300 by August with this kind of support.

For those of you who have been asking about back issues, yes, they are available, but please, let me get the month of March over with first. Those of you who are owed tapes should get them as well real soon as well. Things have been extremely busy around here lately.

Best line of the week...Steve Sims of Lisle, IL (who also has a team in the state playoffs) called to ask about his yearbook. I explained that it was backwards like a Japanese magazine and he said, "At least that means the workrate will be better."

Thank ya all! We'll see ya in a couple of weeks!

WRESTLING FORUM V314
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TO TELL IF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS CURRENT, check the color of your mailing label's ink. Black in means it's current. Green means this is your next to last issue and red means this is your last issue unless you renew. Thanks for reading and we'll see you on March 15th!

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